



20 Day National Geographic Ponant Top End Explorer: Cruise Broome to Darwin

Kimberley Coast - Broome - Kununurra - Darwin

From **\$17,999** Typically \$22,399 pp twin share

10 night PONANT x National Geographic luxury expedition on Le Soleal

National Geographic photographer & expert onboard

Expeditions, tours & activities exploring the incredible Kimberley region

5 night all-inclusive stay at the Berkeley River Lodge

Premium accommodation in Broome, Darwin & Kununurra

Description



National Geographic have teamed up with luxury cruise experts Ponant to bring you this world-class adventure, exploring our very own Kimberley region! Experience this unique destination in comfort and style, all while getting up close to the natural wonders, amazing wildlife and incredible scenery of this region.

Travel from Darwin along the Kimberley coastline before ending your trip with a stay at the Berkeley River Lodge: Australia's most remote luxury lodge. Enjoy a range of fantastic dining, drinks, activities and more on this special itinerary.

For 130 years, National Geographic has explored the people, places and events of our world, showcasing the works of leading explorers, scientists, environmentalists, photographers and film makers. That's why NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC and PONANT have partnered to offer unique ocean cruise expeditions that explore the far corners of our world. Aboard each luxury, small group PONANT voyage, a National Geographic expert and photographer will join guests to share their knowledge and insights. They will enrich the expedition experience through fascinating presentations and informal discussions, offering photography tips and a chance to make a difference.

Itinerary

Day 1

Your adventure begins today in Darwin

On arrival please make your own way to Pearle Cable Beach where you will have 3 days/2 nights to explore all that this lovely region has to offer.

Day 2

Broome

At leisure

Day 3

Board Le Soleal

Embarkation 15/9/2022 from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Departure 15/9/2022 at 8:00 pm

Located in the northwest of the Kimberley region and in the far north of Western Australia, the town of Broome is reputed for its history and its glorious pearling era. The fascinating Chinatown district, which is the historic city centre, and the famous Japanese Cemetery, dates back to 1896, and has a past marked by the immigration of numerous Chinese and Japanese workers, attracted by the prosperous pearl industry at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Broome is also famous for the “Staircase to the Moon”, an optical illusion created by the Moon reflecting on the sand banks at low tide, like a staircase climbing up towards the sky, a unique spectacle provided by nature...

Day 4

Lacepede Islands

The Lacepede Islands are Western Australia's most important breeding habitat for Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*), and have been named by BirdLife International as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The breeding colony of Brown Boobies is possibly the largest in the world. Up to 20,000 Roseate Terns have also been recorded here. Other birds breeding on the islands include Masked Boobies, Australian Pelicans, Lesser Frigatebirds, Eastern Reef Egrets, Silver Gulls, Crested, Bridled and Lesser Crested Terns, Common Noddies, Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers. Join your expedition team for a guided Zodiac® tour to view the prolific wildlife. Due to the sensitive nature of the environment, landings are prohibited on the Lacepede Islands.

Day 5

Collier Bay (Day 5 - 6)

Lying to the east of the Buccaneer archipelago, the ancient landscapes of Collier Bay have been shaped by the massive tidal movements the region is renowned for, creating a photographer's paradise. With a tidal range exceeding 14 metres, recorded near Yule entrance at the southern end of the bay, they are among the largest in the world. This massive daily movement of water creates unique phenomena that occur nowhere else in the world. Nestled in the centre of the Bay is Montgomery Reef, the world's largest inshore reef system. As the tide falls a raging torrent of water cascades off the top of the reef, creating turbulent 'rivers' and mini waterfalls. At the Southern end of the Bay, Talbot Bay is home to the world's only 'Horizontal Falls' described by Sir David Attenborough as "One of the greatest wonders of the natural world." Hidden in the many caves and grottos of this ancient landscape are a multitude of ancient Rock Art galleries. Here you can find spectacular examples of the Wandjina and Gwion Gwion styles.

As we are at the mercy of weather and tide conditions in this region, the activities mentioned above are only possible experiences and can't be guaranteed.

Day 6

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Day 7

Careening Bay

Careening Bay was named by Lieutenant Phillip Parker King after his ship, HMC Mermaid, was careened there during his third voyage of discovery in 1820. King surveyed the western coast to complete the map initiated by Flinders 20 years earlier. The Mermaid had been leaking badly and King needed to find a shallow sandy bay where he could careen his boat to undertake repairs. At a high tide, on a warm September afternoon, he ran the Mermaid onto the sands. For ten days the Mermaid crew worked hard before refloating the vessel. The ship's carpenter carved the name of the vessel and the year into a conspicuous boob tree. The famous boob tree is now 3 metres wide and National Heritage listed. A reminder of a by gone era of exploration!

Day 8

Hunter River

Arguably one of the most scenic parts of the Kimberley coast, Prince Frederick Harbour and the Hunter River are lined with ancient rainforest pockets, pristine mangroves and mosaic sandstone cliffs. They are considered to be some of the most pristine mangrove forests in the world, containing up to 18 different species, supporting a rich and diverse fauna. The sandstone escarpment at the river mouth, known as "Kampamantiya" rises over 200 metres high before giving way to extensive mud banks and mangrove forests home to numerous bird species and the iconic saltwater crocodile. Our expert Expedition Team will share their knowledge with you as you explore this pristine mangrove environment by Zodiac® keeping a constant lookout for wildlife. You will also have the opportunity to reach the Mitchell Falls by helicopter from Naturalist Island beach.

Day 9

Swift Bay

The Bonaparte Archipelago, is a stunningly rugged maze of islands stretching almost 150 km along Western Australia's remote Kimberley coast. Its colour and scale conspire to take ones' breath away. Its distant location has meant it has remained an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience. Phillip Parker King named "Swift's bay" after Jonathon Swift (1667-1745) the author of Gulliver's travels. The 'T' shaped bay is composed of heavily fractured sandstone providing an abundance of rock shelters. On the walls of these shelters are examples of both Wandjina and Gwion Gwion style rock art. Join your expedition team ashore for a guided walk to a number of rock art galleries depicting these unique rock art styles.

Day 10

Vansittart Bay

Jar Island contains ancient rock art galleries depicting the Gwion Gwion style unique to the Kimberley region. Mainly neglected by, or unknown to, the early European researchers of Aboriginal culture in the Kimberley in favour of the dominant and more dramatic Wandjina art, Gwion Gwion art has in recent years gained world prominence. It is generally thought that this art may extend back to over 30,000 years before our time and represents the first wave of seagoing colonisers of the Australian continent. As it is, these are the oldest detailed depiction of human figures in the world. Join your Expedition Team ashore for a short walk, past some fascinating rock formations, to the site of the Gwion Gwion art galleries.

Day 11

King George River

The journey up the King George River is nothing short of breathtaking. The 80-metre-high sides of the gorge display varying degrees of weathering of the ancient Warton sandstone. The colours and textures of the gorge change with the light as you travel further up the river creating a continual changing scenery that is simply stunning. The journey culminates at the King George twin falls; the highest single-drop falls in the whole of the Kimberley (80 m or 260 ft). Fed by wet season run-off the level of water cascading over the falls varies from year to year. Your Expedition Team will escort you in either the Zodiacs® or ships tenders to the foot of the twin falls, and explain all about the stunning geological formations of the canyon.

Day 12

At sea

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 13

Darwin

This morning disembark and make your own way to the Hilton Darwin where you will have a 1 night stay. The day is yours at leisure to explore Darwin

Day 14

Depart for Kununurra

This morning is at leisure in Darwin. This afternoon you will be flying to Kununurra, ready for your next land based adventure! On arrival in Kununurra please make your own way to the Kimberley Grande Hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight - Kimberley Grande Hotel

Day 15

Berkeley River Lodge

This morning is at leisure in Kununurra. This afternoon you will be transferred to the airport to board a charter flight to Berkeley River Lodge at 2.00pm. In one of the last true wilderness areas on earth, between Timor Sea sunrises and Berkeley River sunsets, the ultimate Kimberley adventure and refined indulgence await. Australia's most remote mainland luxury lodge experience, only accessible by air, getting to the Berkeley River Lodge is half the adventure. Leave modern life far behind and relax into the rhythms of nature in your luxurious villa floating atop the coastal dunes. Dedicated and experienced staff are available on-site to guide you on river cruises, 4WD tours, sunset drinks, fishing expeditions, hiking and animal watching, and skilled chefs will cater all of your meals, including a five-course degustation dinner each night. If that's not enough, your private glass-fronted villa with the occasional seating and daybed on your deck beckons you to laze away an afternoon, then enjoy cheese platters and drinks on your balcony as the sun sets over the Timor Sea.

Day 16

Berkeley River Lodge

Enjoy the spectacular facilities offered at this luxurious lodge. Choose to hop on a river cruise, sign up for Bush & Beach 4WD adventures or guided creek walks!

Accommodation: Berkeley River Lodge in a Villa

Day 17

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Day 20

Departure

This morning after breakfast, transfer for your flight from Berkeley River back to Kununurra!

This is where the tour ends, and you can fly out after 1pm today. Want to keep the adventure going? Why not extend the trip and head off to the Bungle Bungles? Ask us today!

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions

- 2 Nights in a Guest Room at Pearle Cable Beach Broome including breakfast
- 10 night cruise on National Geographic Le Soleal in a Superior Room, including all meals, most drinks, and daily shore excursions
- 1 night in Darwin in a King Guest Room at the Hilton
- Flight from Darwin to Kununurra
- 1 night at Kimberley Grande in a Terrace or Pool View Room
- Charter flight from Kununurra to Berkeley River Lodge
- 5 nights in a Kimberley Villa (All inclusive)
- Charter flight from Berkeley River Lodge to Kununurra.

This itinerary is given as an indication only. Based on tide times and weather conditions, the Captain and the Expedition Leader may need to switch the order of certain ports of call around to ensure guests have the best possible experience.

Covid19 policy: Guests must have a medical check 7 days prior to boarding and a PCR Test

Images courtesy of Ponant.

Exclusions

- Anything not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal expenses
- Flights
- Travel insurance

Child policy (4 to 18 years) Children are not permitted on this tour package.

The Traveldream 14 day refund guarantee does NOT apply to this booking once reservations have been put in place and confirmed.

ID: A Passport with 6 months validity is required to be taken with you to board the cruise ship.

Currency: on board is Euros

Insurance: All guests must have travel insurance to participate on this tour and will be required to show this prior to departure. (including Remote Area Evacuation)

Level of fitness: All participants should be in good general health, able to walk reasonable distances over sometimes uneven terrain, and stand during excursions.

All guests must be able to make their own way up and down stairs in case of emergency.